

TALON

Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, September 1, 2001

Task Force Eagle
www.tfeagle.army.mil

A photograph showing three soldiers in silhouette, walking through a field of wildflowers. The scene is backlit by a bright sunset or sunrise, creating a hazy, orange glow in the sky. The soldiers are wearing tactical gear and carrying equipment. The soldier in the foreground is slightly out of focus, while the two behind him are more clearly visible.

March and Shoot Competition Unites Armed Forces in BiH

Weapons Discovered in the Hills of Banovici

Don't Forget the Salt!

Isn't it funny how small things can escalate into big things? William Soutar, one of the great Scottish poets of this past century, wrote the following parable:

There was once a woodcutter's wife who forgot to put salt in her husband's morning porridge. When he angrily complained, she told him that he was a fool to make such a fuss about so trifling a matter. This infuriated the woodcutter, and commencing work in the forest he lashed out at a tree with such force and venom that the axe head flew off.

It injured his employer's favorite horse that was being led to the blacksmith's shop. That horse was to have taken his employer, a nobleman and an important man in the district, to a meeting of lords to discuss their differences with the king. Because of his anger and foul mood due to the need to arrange for another horse, the nobleman successfully argued for an uprising against the king.

In the rebellion that followed many were killed, and there followed a period of poverty, famine and unrest. This rebellion, loss of life and suffering happened because a woodcutter's wife forgot to salt her husband's porridge.

Small things can have big results. The ripples from even a small stone into a pool of water are limited only by the water's edge. Think about that attitude you go to work with each day. Think about that attitude you'll go home with in a very short while!

Think about those words said to people who need encouragement. Think about the gestures of love to the important people in your life...a touch, a kiss, a smile and a nice surprise. And think about the small things you do for yourself that shape how you feel about life in your world...relaxing moments, a great workout at the gym, a good book or a long walk. And may I be so bold to suggest a time of quiet reflection and prayer? The psalmist says, "In the morning my prayer comes before you" (88:13). Just as many of us wouldn't think of starting the day without a cup of coffee – a small thing, so may we be encouraged to take time to pray - a small thing that can make your day!

Truly, the small things make all the difference. *Don't forget the salt in your life!*

Thoughts for the Week

Sunday: "Yesterday is a cancelled check; tomorrow is a promissory note; today is the only cash you have – so spend it wisely." **Kay Lyons**

Monday: "In my experience, the best creative work is never done when one is unhappy." **Albert Einstein**

Tuesday: "Contentment comes not so much from great wealth as from few wants." **Epictetus**

Wednesday: "A single conversation with a wise man is better than 10 years of study." **Anonymous**

Thursday: "Don't throw away the old bucket until you know whether the new one holds water." **Anonymous**

Friday: "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all!" **Helen Keller**

Saturday: "The best remedy for 'wrongs' is to forget them." **Anonymous**

Chaplain (Maj.) Mike Durham
Eagle Base

TALON

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Members of the Federation Army's II Corps from Tuzla make their way over rough terrain during the March and Shoot competition Aug. 27. (Photo by Pfc. Michael V. Bennett)



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Military Gets Savings Plan Option

By Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

Starting Oct. 9, service members can choose to contribute a percentage of their pay to the military's thrift savings and investment program as part of building an egg nest for retirement.

The Thrift Savings Plan, administered by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, previously has been available only to federal civilian employees.

During fiscal 2001, the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act extended TSP participation to active duty and reserve component members of the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard and uniformed members of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. TSP is separate from and in addition to the military retirement system, which is based on years of service and rank.

The first enrollment window for persons who entered military service on or before Dec. 8, 2001, is from Oct. 9, 2001, to Jan. 31, 2002.

Persons who enroll during this period will see TSP contributions deducted each month from their pay starting in January 2002.

Persons who join the uniformed services after Dec. 8, 2001, will have 60 days after entering service to enroll in the TSP. After the special first enrollment period, service members may use two "open seasons" each year to join, quit or change the amount of their contributions.

Currently, these periods are May 15 through July 31 and Nov. 15 through Jan. 31. Military members can enroll in TSP by completing a TSP election form and submitting it through their local service branch finance office.

Enrollment forms are available for download on the TSP Web site, <http://www.tsp.gov> > <http://www.tsp.gov>, or can be obtained at local military finance offices.

Participants can invest any whole percentage of up to 7 percent of their base pay in any or all of five TSP funds:

*** The conservative G Fund consists exclusively of investments in short-term, nonmarketable U.S. Treasury securities specially issued to TSP. Since 1991, the fund has earned an annual average of 6.74 percent.**

***The F Fund is TSP's bond market index fund. Since 1991, the fund has earned an annual average of 7.87 percent — and 12.78 percent in the past 12 months ending July 31.**

***The C Fund is TSP's large-company U.S. stock index fund. Since 1991, the fund has earned an annual average of 17.43 percent, but it has reported a 14.3 percent loss in the past 12 months ending July 31.**

***The S Fund is TSP's medium and small company stock index fund. The I Fund is its international stock index fund. Both funds opened in May, so neither has a long-term track record.**

Only G Fund investments and earnings are backed by the U.S. government against loss.

TSP participants risk losing some or all their investments and earnings in the F, C, S and I funds — but the funds' earning potential is unlimited. Service members can contribute as little as 1 percent of their base pay per pay period, up to the 7 percent limit in 2002.

The limit increases by 1 percent per year until 2005, after which contributions will be limited by Internal Revenue Code guidelines. Members may also elect to contribute any amount of incentive pay or special pay, to include bonus pay.

Like civilian workers covered by the old Civil Service Retirement System, service members generally will not receive TSP matching funds from the government.

One exception is troops in specialties designated critical by their service secretaries; those receiving matching funds will be obligated to serve a six-year active duty commitment.

Strict rules apply to service members' withdrawal of funds from TSP accounts before they retire. Federal and state income taxes on investments and earnings are deferred so long as the money stays in the TSP account.

Withdrawals are taxed as ordinary income, and early withdrawals are penalized under some circumstances.

Military members who already have a civilian TSP account, such as past and present federal civilian employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve, can open an entirely separate, second TSP account.



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Troops Find Weapons in the Hills

Cache discovered during routine patrol

Story by Spc. Grant Calease

Photo by Sgt. Jim Dowd

Camp Comanche

U.S. soldiers from the Georgia Army National Guard discovered a large cache of weapons Aug. 19 in Bosnia.

The cache was found in the hills surrounding Banovici, eight miles west of Camp Comanche, by soldiers from Co. B, 1st Battalion, 108th Armor.

"We were doing a normal, routine presence patrol in this village and we did an investigation of a storage shed," said Co. B commander Capt. Frank Holder.

"We just recently started patrolling this area," said Staff Sgt. Charles Pierce of Co. B. He said another unit that patrolled the area earlier provided his company with some intelligence on the barn and a follow-up uncovered the cache.

After securing the area, soldiers from Co. B called their command and Explosive Ordnance Disposal, who came out to the site and found considerably more ordnance



This mortar, along with several rifles, machine guns and other ordnance were discovered in a weapons cache near Banovici.

than originally expected, said Capt. Holder.

"We found an array of weapons from

machine guns and bolt-action rifles to a rocket propelled grenade launcher and lots of ammo," Capt. Holder said.

"Our concern is that some of these weapons might have been stolen from or perhaps removed from a weapons storage site," said Warrant Officer Ralph Lovett, deputy compliance chief, Joint Military Commission at Eagle Base.

The JMC works with the weapons storage sites in the area. They monitor the sites run by the Armed Forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as the ones run by the International Police Task Force, said Warrant Officer Lovett.

The weapons collected from the discovered cache will be added to the weapons gathered as part of Project Harvest. Project Harvest is a Bosnian-led effort assisted by Multinational Division (North) to encourage local citizens to turn in any illegal or unwanted weapons and ammunition. It also encourages citizens to report ordnance to the proper authorities for collection.

"They will all most likely be destroyed," said Warrant Officer Lovett of the weapons and ordnance.

Upcoming Closures

Eagle Base Sports Complex and Movie Theater –

The Eagle Base Sports Complex and Movie Theater will be closed Sept. 19 - Oct. 19 for construction and reconditioning. MWR will still operate their video theatre in building 14 along Salute Alley.

Balkan Grille –

The Balkan Grille will be closed beginning 9 p.m. Oct. 4, until 5 p.m. Oct. 5 for the transfer of authority reception. Meal hours at the Longhorn Grille will be extended to accommodate the additional soldiers.

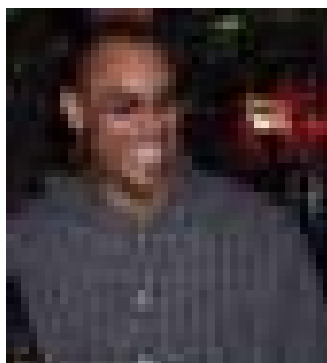
Eagle Base civilian dies

Robert Ruiz, 27, worked at Education Center

A memorial service was held Wednesday on Eagle Base for the U.S. civilian who died Sunday after being stabbed.

Robert Ruiz's service was attended by his friends and acquaintances who include soldiers and co-workers.

"Our hearts go out to the family and loved ones of Mr. Robert Ruiz," said Maj. Gen. Walter L. Sharp, commanding general, Multinational Division (North).



Robert Ruiz

Mr. Ruiz's spouse is being held as a suspect in the stabbing at the U.S. Army detention facility in Mannheim, Germany. She is a U.S. soldier assigned to the Brussels Health Clinic in Belgium. In accordance with Department of Defense guidance, specific information in matters under investigation is not disclosed until completion.

"This is a tremendous loss," said his supervisor and friend, Paul Lovello, director of education centers in Multinational Division (North), Sarajevo and Tazsar. At the memorial service, Mr. Lovello, eulogized that Mr. Ruiz, "Was respected and respectful. I am fortunate to have known him."

Chap. (Maj.) Mike Durham, command chaplain, explained that the service was "a way to celebrate the life of one who graced our lives. Your lives are

much richer because of the time you spent with him."

Mr. Ruiz joined the education center staff in March 2000. After a short hiatus, he returned in July.

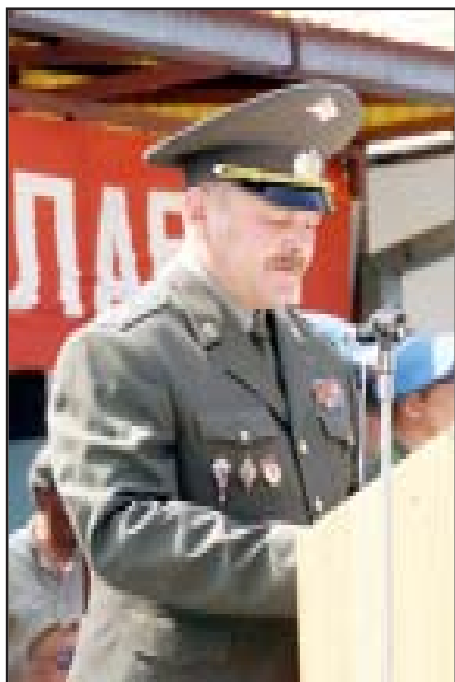
"This was a fine 27-year-old patriot, still serving his country. He was a robust young man," Mr. Lovello said of Mr. Ruiz, who was recognized around Eagle Base for the "patriotic" tattoos that covered both arms, he noted.

Mr. Ruiz served in the Marine Corps for seven years as an embassy guard in Nigeria and Brussels before his employment with the education center.

No charges have been filed. The investigation continues.

The General Court Martial Convening Authority is the Commanding General, 21st Theater Support Command in Europe.

Russian Airborne



(Above) Col. Vladimir Demidov, commander of the 22nd Separate Peacekeeping Airborne Russian Regiment, praises his troops for their integrity and heroism during the Russian Airborne Day ceremony.

(Below) Paratroopers from the 22nd SPARR demonstrate precision hand-to-hand combat techniques in formation. The style is similar to martial arts. (Above) A Russian paratrooper breaks clay tiles while fellow soldiers hold them.

Story by
Air Force Maj.
Richard C. Sater
Photos by
Sgt. Allen Connor
Eagle Base

Their motto brags "No one except us."

A celebration of Russian Airborne Day Aug. 2 at Camp Ugljevik in Multinational Division (North) clearly illustrated that the airborne troops have earned exclusive rights to such a philosophy.

The Russian Parachute Troop has a rich heritage dating to Aug. 2, 1930, when a dozen paratroopers from the Air Force of Moscow successfully jumped from an airplane as an experiment. It worked, ushering in a new era for Russian air power. Every Aug. 2, in honor of the first jump, the RPT celebrates its birthday. Russia's airborne elite is easily recognizable by the distinctive blue and white striped shirt and blue-green beret. Members of the 22nd Separate Peacekeeping Airborne Russian Regiment dressed in their finest uniforms and marked the birthday with much pomp and circumstance: flags, a parade, a brass band, medals and speeches.

Among the distinguished speakers was the 22nd's commander, Col. Vladimir Demidov, who praised his troops for their "duty, integrity, heroism and love of state." Lt. Gen. Michael Dodson, commander of the Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also commended the assembled soldiers for their "patriotism, strength, resilience and team spirit," he said. The speeches were translated twice so that everyone in the assembled crowd – Russian, Bosnian and American –

could follow along. After the formal ceremony, a drill team from the regiment performed some truly spectacular feats of strength and daring, starting with a demonstration of hand-to-hand combat techniques and ending with the destruction of building materials, amid much flame and gunshot.

The show combined martial arts, wrestling, and dance, choreographed for maximum theatrical effect. Fearless airborne soldiers shattered bottles, bricks, concrete blocks and clay tiles with their fists, feet or foreheads, emerging bloody but grinning from the adrenaline rush.

"It's a tradition," said Maj. Alexander Starunsky, the 22nd SPARR's public relations officer. "Fun, airborne-style. The noise, the smoke,



Clay tiles and team spirit fly high during the Russian Airborne Day ceremony. These troops are considered to be the strongest in the Russian Airborne Division.



e Day



day festivi-
sian army.

the speed – it is the spirit of the team.” And it is the energy and enthusiasm of no one except the Russian Parachute Troop.

The only element missing from the celebration was a demonstration by the troops of their best skill: parachuting. They were unable to schedule the necessary air transportation, Maj. Starunsky said.

There are approximately 900 Russian troops currently serving in SFOR, spread across four base camps; Ugljevik is the Russian forces’ headquarters.

The Russian regi-ment receives its tasking from the U.S. command at Eagle Base, according to Maj. Starunsky. The Russians support Civil-Military Cooperation missions (CIMIC), demining operations, pre-sence patrols, and medical or humanitarian assistance.

Russian troops have been involved in SFOR and its predecessor, the Implementation Force, since the beginning in late 1995, Maj. Starunsky said.

Many of the current soldiers are veterans; some are completing their second or third rotation here. “Deployment to Bosnia is very honorable,” he said.

Airborne soldiers might seem overqualified for a ground mission, but “they are our most prepared troops, physically and psychologically. They’re aggressive, the strongest troops in the Russian army. A lot of them have real combat experience.”

The missions – particularly CIMIC – were “unexpected to them. At the beginning, it was very difficult, but now they are more experienced, and it’s no problem.”

Later this year, however, with the next rotation, regular infantry troops are scheduled to replace the 22nd SPARR, but the Russian commitment will stand firm. “As far as I know, there is no date for the end of the mission. When the mission is accomplished, we will withdraw,” Maj. Starunsky said.



The Airborne Day celebration would not be complete without breaking bricks, blocks, clay tiles and bottles with hands, feet – and heads.

Paratroopers lay wreaths on a memorial in remembrance of Gen. Vasiley Magelov during the Russian Airborne Day ceremony. Gen. Magelov is highly respected among paratroopers due to his leadership in setting apart the elite men of airborne troops.





Armed F

Story by
Cpl. Anthony Koch
Eagle Base

Teamwork takes trust, and trust comes from building on positive, common experiences and confidence. Teams participating in the first-ever Multinational Division (North) 'March and Shoot' competition Aug. 27 learned about teamwork, and stamina, through the 11-person team competition. More than 100

Sgt. Calvin Townsend, Jr., from Task Force Medical Eagle, wipes down his rifle bolt in preparation for the shooting competition.(Photo by Cpl. Anthony Koch)

JMC's Planning Makes Perfect

Story by **Cpl. Anthony Koch**
Eagle Base

The 'March and Shoot' competition held Aug. 27 involved all the battle groups of Multinational Division (North). They had coalition medical support which required much coordination and planning.

"It was a cooperative effort between (Stabilization Forces) and (Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina)," said Cpt. William D. Meredith, plans officer for the Joint Military Commission, regarding the entire operation.

Nearly two months ago the planning for this mission began,

according to Maj. Thomas Wren, special projects officer for the JMC. It required much coordination between all other battle groups in MND(N), much of which was done face to face instead over the phone or email.

Medical planning for this possibly dangerous event, proved a challenge. "We had to make sure that the medical planning incorporated all the different nations, and the AF in BiH," said Cpt. Nicole Cunningham, from the deputy division surgeons office. According to Cpt. Cunningham, they needed to have multinational medical coverage because the U.S. Army is restricted by Title 10, which contains the guidelines for what medical treatment the U.S. Army can provide to individuals.

"In order to get ready for this event, we had to come out here, recon the route and provide a medical assessment to JMC of the various types of injuries that may have occurred," said Cpt. Cunningham.

Once the medical assessment was made, the medical personnel made their plan for coverage and then coordinated with the other battle groups in MND(N) to ensure they provided enough personnel and equipment to cover all possible medical needs during the competition.

"We, as far as SFOR and MND (N) is concerned, provided five ambulances, three from the Americans, one from the Turkish, and one from the (Nordic Polish Battle Group). We also had roving medics who traveled between each point. I think we had a total of 20 medics between AF in BiH, American, NORDPOL and the Turkish," Capt. Cunningham said.

In the end there were zero injuries.

According to Cpt. Meredith, when it comes to making sure co-ordination is done right, "trust is good, checking is better."



Maj. Gen. Walter L. Sharp, Multinational Division North Commander, presents the March and Shoot first place trophy for overall performance to Federation Army Master Sgt. Alihodzic Fikret, leader of the winning II Corp team.(Photo by Cpl. Anthony Koch)



Forces Compete in March and Shoot

troops from 10 teams tested their trust of one another during the event.

"(The march and shoot competition) was an opportunity to bring the forces within Bosnia together as well as our own forces and to get us all to interact in a competition," said Canadian Army Maj. Doug Claggett, deputy chief of the Joint Military Commission.

The JMC-sponsored competition was patterned after the Federation Army (VF) II Corps' March and Shoot held May 24, on their training range, Pasa Bunar. The competition gave all groups of MND(N) an opportunity to share in a day of team-oriented events.

"The March and Shoot was held to promote goodwill and build a solid cooperative spirit among all armed forces in MND(N)," said Capt. William D. Meredith, plans officer for the JMC.

Every battle group in MND(N) had a team in the competition, with the exception of the Turkish Battalion, who couldn't participate due to mission requirements. There were a total four teams from the Federation Army, both the Bosniac (VF-B) and Bosnian Croat (VF-H), one from the Nordic-Polish Battle Group, one from the

Event	Team
Equipment Carry	I Corps VF-B
Litter Carry	I Corps VF-B
March	II Corps VF-B
Shoot	II Corps VF-B
Overall	First Place - I Corps VF-B Second Place - I Corps VF-B Third Place - Third Guards Corps

Russian army, and four from the U.S. Although the Army of the Republic of Srpska did not compete in this March and Shoot, they had representatives at the competition for possible future participation in similar events.

"We have a continuous relationship with all the armed forces in Bosnia," said Maj. Claggett. "This was an opportunity to bring their soldiers – because we deal with the headquarters and the commanders and their staff – together with our soldiers to do something that was different, challenging and combined. To give them a chance to interact, at the soldier level."

The competition gave soldiers of every nation participating an opportunity to meet with their multinational counterparts, and share in the common experience of the competition, they said.

"It was great to work with the other foreign troops," said Spc. Eric Larson, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry. "It was great training."

The competition consisted of five events, and each event's score was weighed differently toward the final tally. The first event was a 12-kilometer timed march, in which every member of the 11-person team had to finish together. The terrain was the some of the toughest many had ever encountered.

"In my 13 years in the military, it was the roughest course I've ever been on," said Staff Sgt. Jason Honeycutt, Company A, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry.

About four kilometers into the march, the participants encountered the second event, an ammunition carry. Competitors were required to carry five, 75-pound ammunition boxes and a 55-gallon drum for a total of 200 meters. The troopers then continued down the trail about another four kilometers to the next event, a litter, or stretcher, carry.

Similar to the ammo carry, the soldiers were required to lug five litters, weighing 185 pounds each, for 200 meters. Four kilometers farther down the road, the march ended and the participants prepared for the final event, the shooting competition.

Prior to going onto the firing range, the troops were required to field-strip their weapons and perform

a functions check. After clearing the disassembly/assembly point, the competitors were issued their ammunition, and moved to the starting line for the final event, the shooting competition.

An awards ceremony was held promptly after the competition.

"Cooperative efforts such as today's March and Shoot, will continue to build self-confidence in your abilities and trust among your soldiers, leaders and citizens," Maj. Gen. Walter L. Sharp, commander, MND(N), said in his address to the crowd.

Throughout his speech, the general stressed that this competition, as well as the Harvest Program, disaster relief during the recent flooding and the partnership in reducing the number of weapons storage sites has shown that the Armed Forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, along with the citizens of the country, can cooperate and work together as a "force for good".

"By adhering to the rule of law and recognizing civilian control of the military, professional armies contribute greatly to peace and stability," said Maj. Gen. Sharp.

The Bosnian Minister of Defense, Mr. Mijo Anic and Maj. Gen. Sharp awarded medals and trophies to the winners. II Corps' home field advantage paid off, they finished first place in overall performance.

I Corps finished in second place, and 3rd Guard Federation Military rounded out the top three.

"It was a significant issue to allow federation soldiers of VF-H and VF-B components to work together and compete together," said Maj. Claggett. "So we think it was a big motivator and a big step forward for the Armed Forces in Bosnia."



(Right) The team representing the Separate Peacekeeping Airborne Russian Regiment nears the end of the ammunition carry. (Photo by Pfc. Michael Bennett)

(Left) Stretchers full of sandbags lay waiting in the morning fog. Participants carried the stretchers 200 meters during the March and Shoot competition. (Photo by Spc. Daniel Ernst)



760th Ordnance Co. Tests the 'Big Bang' Theory With...

C4 and a Whole Lot More

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Larsen
Eagle Base

How does one get rid of thousands of grenades, a load of land mines, and crates of mortar rounds – in all, about 3,500 pounds of ordnance, left over from the 1992-95 war in Bosnia?

Simple – blow it up.

That's exactly what soldiers from the 760th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) did Aug. 21, near Banovici, a city 25 kilometers west of Eagle Base. Bosnian Federation troops arrived with three trucks full of ordnance, ranging from homemade hand grenades (tin cans with fuzes sticking out of the top) to sophisticated TMM-1 antitank mines, powerful enough to blow a 4-foot crater into the ground. Teams of soldiers toiled in the August sun, removing boxes and boxes of ordnance until the trucks were emptied.

Capt. Pat Unzicker, the company commander, has been in the EOD field for four years. He said nothing compares to hands-on, live-fire work.

"Seeing it in photos and publications is one thing," he said. "Being out here, setting the charges, and actually seeing it go up – that's another."

The 760th has been in country for a little over seven months. In that time, Capt. Unzicker estimated, the company has destroyed more than 11,500 pounds of ordnance.

Setting up the demolition, or 'demo' as the EOD technicians say, isn't as easy as it might sound.

"We'll probably work on it two or three hours to set the shot up, depending on the kind of ordnance they have," said 1st Sgt. Loren Nace.

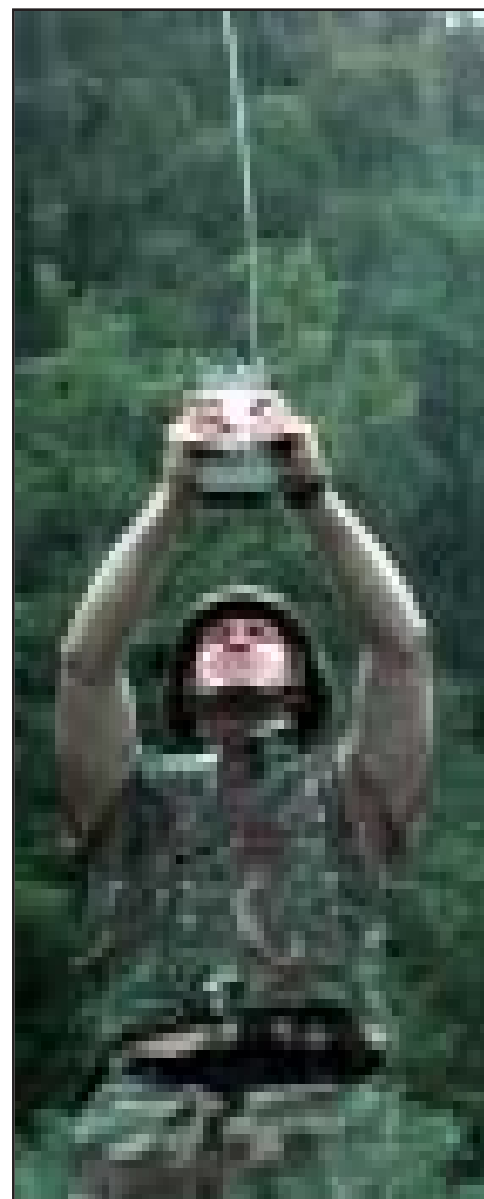
First Sgt. Nace said the EOD technicians layer the demo; on this particular pile, stacks of rifle grenades were laid in a row and covered by land mines.

One pile of ordnance, or 'shot', made up of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), rifle grenades and land mines, covered a 2-and-one-half by 12-foot area on the ground, and was nearly 2-feet high.

First Sgt. Nace said one of the keys to a successful demo is to make sure all the ordnance is touching. Once that's done, the techs go to work with 1-and-one-quarter-pound blocks of Composition 4, more commonly known as C4 explosive, which are the demolition charges.

"We'll get all our explosives, add to it to propagate it, so that when one goes off they all go off, like a chain reaction," he said. "It's like making a cake – a layered cake. As long as everything's touching, normally it'll go off. When you have gaps in between your explosives, you have problems."

Being around so much ammunition and ordnance, some troops were noticeably nervous. Capt. Unzicker reassured the soldiers from Company C, 648th Engineers and the



Staff Sgt. Daniel Massey triggers the detonation of ordnance near the demolition range in Banovici.

92nd Engineer Battalion, who were helping to set up the shots, there was nothing to worry about.

"This ordnance is all safe to handle," he said, handing one soldier an antipersonnel land mine that was about the size of a can of shoe polish. "There are no fuzes in the mines, and the mortar rounds still have the safety wires. "As long as you treat it with respect, like all ammunition, there's no problem," he added.

Owing to the hot August weather, the troops on the demo range had removed their BDU shirts, and were clad in T-shirts, helmet and body armor. Bottles of water were



Images of rocket grenades reflect in the sunglasses of Ensign Chris Anderson, a Navy EOD officer working with the 760th Ordnance Company (EOD), as he stacks the grenades while getting them ready for destruction.

More

scattered here and there, and the EOD techs went about readying the shots; there were three planned. Capt. Unzicker explained that each shot would contain about 1,000 pounds of ordnance.

Blocks of C4 – which in the heat were soft and pliable – were placed on the top and sides of the piles. The demo blocks had double-sided tape on the back, and stuck easily to the varied surfaces of the ordnance, whether metal, wood or plastic.

Once C4 charges were placed on all the shots, blasting caps were inserted into several of the charges (“We like redundancy,” said 1st Sgt. Nace) and detonation cord was attached. The cord was run to radio receivers placed behind a mound of dirt. The receivers get the signal to trigger the explosions, sent from nearly a mile away.

Ensign Chris Anderson, a Navy EOD officer attached to the 760th, was a mile east of the shots, blocking a road to make sure no one came into the area. His voice crackled over the radio.

“The area is clear. Fire in the hole! Fire in the hole! Fire in the hole!”

With that, Staff Sgt. Daniel Massey, at the safe site a mile west of the blast range, sent the ‘fire’ command on the radio. First, a warning shot was fired – an antitank mine. The blast echoed through the trees. “We do that so any civilians in the area know we’re about to blast,” 1st Sgt. Nace said. “This is where we do all our shots, and the people around here know what the warning shot means.”

One minute later, Staff Sgt. Massey got the okay from Capt. Unzicker to fire the first shot, the pile of rifle grenades and RPGs. A thunderous blast announced the destruction of that pile; the shock wave ripped through the trees. Some soldiers felt like they’d been hit in the chest. The sequence was repeated two more times. The last shot, the mound of antitank mines, land mines and mortar rounds, was the largest. Shrapnel tore into trees around the blast site, and chunks of dirt and rocks flew into the air.

After the last shot and waiting for the ‘all clear’ from Ensign Anderson, the EOD team returned to the site. What was ground recently made level by the engineers now contained three craters. The mine shot made the largest; a crater nearly 12 feet deep and 30 feet wide was now there; a clod of dirt taller than a man was thrown six feet from its edge.

“You know, I used to be in the infantry, and that was fun,” said Capt. Unzicker. “But this – man, you can’t beat this!”



(Top) Pfc. Fronche Brooks, 92nd Engineer Battalion, unloads a box of rifle grenades during the EOD operation near Banovici. (Above) A video image of an ordnance blast. Observers stand a mile away due to safety concerns. (Video by Sgt. Jonathan Meek)

'Diamondbacks' Head to New Camps

Story and photo by Cpl. Anthony Koch
Eagle Base

With more than 80,000 miles of presence patrols under their belt, soldiers from Company D, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry settle in to their new home for the remaining 'miles' of their Bosnian tour.

Members of Co. D, also known as the 'Diamondbacks', moved from Coyote Station to Eagle Base and Camp McGovern Aug. 3. They will finish their time in the Balkans operating from these two new locations.

This move was prompted to prepare for the transition from Stabilization Force 9 to SFOR 10.

"They're trying to re-organize for SFOR 10 and the company that replaces us will be here at Eagle Base," said Co. D 1st Sgt. Gene Ravenscraft. "So we're just getting everything set up. So when they come in for their right-seat ride, everything will be where it's supposed to be."

"Everything" includes establishing the 'footprint', or area of responsibility, and preparing equipment for lateral transfer and turn-in. These missions are the focus of the company in preparation for the arrival of SFOR 10, according to 1st Lt. Jon Fisher, company executive officer.

The Arkansas National Guard company's mission will remain essentially the same, presence patrols and weapons storage site inspections, according to 1st Sgt. Ravenscraft. Their former area of coverage included Lukavac, Tuzla and Srebrenik. Now the Diamondbacks will be responsible for patrolling the Tuzla and Lukavac areas, and Troop C, 3d Squadron, 7th Cavalry will be responsible for patrolling Srebrenik.

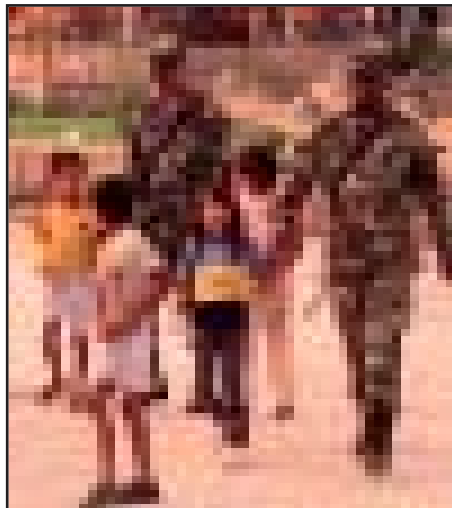
"It hasn't changed our mission, other than extending our (travel) time to our AOR," 1st Lt. Fisher said about the move.

Coyote Station is in Lukavac, about a 30-minute drive from Eagle Base, and Co.D was the only military unit there. With its departure, the post now serves as Brown and Root Corporation's headquarters.

"The whole set-up, the whole (base), is still there; (Brown and Root) didn't tear anything down," explained 1st Sgt. Ravenscraft.

When the company arrived in country Mar. 11, soldiers set up their main camp at Coyote Station and have been there until this move. Co. D also had a platoon at Hill 722 for eight weeks until it closed in May.

Sgt. Larry Davis (left) and Spc. Torrey Alexander, with Company D, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry interact with local children while on patrol in Lukavac. The Arkansas National Guard company will continue presence patrols in Lukavac as well as Tuzla although it moved from Coyote Station Aug. 3.



Soldier on the Street

"What have you learned from working with foreign soldiers?"

I have learned that we deal with our soldiers the same way, and we have learned many other things they already know because of their missions.

1st Sgt. Edmundo Batista
1st Portuguese Bn
Camp Comanche



We have so much in common. There are so many similarities between our armies. So many it's almost scary.

Staff Sgt. Chris Cleary
1st Bn, 108th Armor
Camp Comanche

We've not only learned, but have taught others about Finland. Learning is always a two-way influence.

Lt. Col. Martti Kari
Finnish CIMIC
Eagle Base

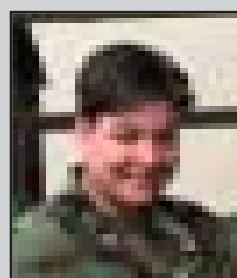


I've learned we train to different standards. Some of ours are higher and some of theirs are higher. The important thing is we all come together and learn from each other.

Sgt. Kenny Brooks
HHC 2nd Bn, 121st Inf.
Camp Comanche

We have the same training. We just speak a different language.

Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Gibson
2nd Bn, 121st Inf.
Camp Comanche



Their countries are more than just lines on a map. Being around the soldiers makes their countries more real, more three-dimensional.

Spc. Carin Hagman
1022nd Med Co.
Eagle Base